

**Thomas Jefferson to Robert Fulton, August 16, 1807,
The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes.
Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester
Ford.**

TO ROBERT FULTON J. MSS.

Monticello, August 16, 1807.

Sir, —Your letter of July 28, came to hand just as I was about leaving Washington, & it has not been sooner in my power to acknowledge it. I consider your torpedoes as very valuable means of defence of harbors, & have no doubt that we should adopt them to a considerable degree. Not that I go the whole length (as I believe you do) of considering them as solely to be relied on. Neither a nation nor those entrusted with its affairs, could be justifiable, however sanguine their expectations, in trusting solely to an engine not yet sufficiently tried, under all the circumstances which may occur, & against which we know not as yet what means of parrying may be devised. If, indeed, the mode of attaching them to the cable of a ship be the only one proposed, modes of prevention cannot be difficult. But I have ever looked to the submarine boat as most to be depended on for attaching them, & tho' I see no mention of it in your letter, or your publications, I am in hopes it is not abandoned as impracticable. I should wish to see a corps of young men trained to this service. It would belong to the engineers if at land, but being nautical, I suppose we must have a corps of naval engineers, to practise & use them. I do not know whether we have authority to put any part of our existing naval establishment in a course of training, but it shall be the subject of a consultation with the Secretary of the Navy. Genl Dearborne has informed you of the urgency of our want of you at N Orleans for the locks there.

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I salute you with great respect & esteem.